REMARKS

Applicant presents the following remarks in association with this Request for Continued Examination, and adopts the remarks made in the response to the final Office Action of August 9, 2006. In the present response, claims 1 and 8 are amended. Claims 1-13 are pending. No new matter is added.

Double Patenting

The final Office Action maintained the provisional rejection of claims 1-7 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application No. 10/871,698. As discussed in Applicant's response to the final office Action mailed October 10, 2006, Applicant traverses this rejection and defers action until one of the pending applications issues. Applicant notes that both applications are currently pending, and that until one of the two applications issues it is not certain that the claims in both applications will remain in the current form.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The final Office Action rejected claims 1-2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Jennison (U.S. Patent No. 6,535,602). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Applicant notes that independent claim 1, as currently presented, requires "a plurality of interconnect locations mounted to the front major surface of the back plane, each interconnect location defining a card edge socket with normally connected contact pairs connected to the back plane, each contact pair electrically connected in the absence of an interconnect module introduced into the card edge socket." Applicant notes that this reflects an amendment to the claims to clarify that the contact pairs are normally connected in the absence of an interconnect module introduced into the card edge socket. Support for this amendment is found, for example, at page 4, line 25 to page 5, line 3 of the present application.

Applicant asserts that Jennison at least fails to disclose electrically connected contact pairs of a card edge socket in the absence of an interconnect module introduced into that socket. The Examiner noted in the final Office Action that "the card edge socket with jumpers

permanently inserted to it is a card edge socket with normally connected contact pairs." Applicant continues to disagree with this assertion, and adopts the arguments made in the response of October 10, 2006 in their entirety. Applicant further notes that Jennison explicitly discloses that, in the absence of the jumpers 5 or 6 inserted into the edge card connectors 3, "there is a physical break between the internal network and the service provider network." Jennison, col. 3, lines 27-28. Therefore, Jennison fails to disclose the claimed configuration in which no interconnect module or other removable circuit module (i.e. jumper) is present.

For at least this additional reason, as well as the reasons set forth in the response of October 10, 2006, Applicant asserts that claim 1 is not anticipated by Jennison. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1. Similarly, claim 2 is dependent upon claim 1 and inherits all of the features claimed therein. Applicant asserts that claim 2 is not anticipated by Jennison for at least the same reasons, and respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 2.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The final Office Action rejected claims 5-9, 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jennison in view of Carlson et al. (U.S. Reissue Patent No. RE37,125). The final Office Action also rejected claims 3, 4, 10, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jennison in view of both Carlson et al. and Curry et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,053,764). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections as well.

Claims 3-7 are dependent upon independent claim 1, and as such, inherit all claim limitations therefrom. These claims therefore also include a card edge socket with normally connected contact pairs "electrically connected in the absence of an interconnect module introduced into the card edge socket," and are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1.

Additionally, claim 8 is amended to require "a plurality of interconnect locations for each receiving a removable circuit module, each interconnect location mounted to the front major surface of the back plane and including normally connected contact pairs, each contact pair

electrically connected in the absence of a circuit module." Claims 9-13 are dependent upon claim 8, and inherit this element.

As explained above with respect to claims 1-2, Jennison does not disclose normally connected pairs in the absence of an interconnect module in the card edge socket, or normally connected contact pairs at an interconnect location for receiving a removable circuit module. Applicant further asserts that Jennison is not combinable with either Carlson et al. or Curry et al. to teach or suggest such features.

As explained above, Applicant notes that Jennison fails to disclose normally connected contact pairs that are electrically connected in the absence of an interconnect module or circuit module introduced into a card edge socket or other interconnect location. Applicant notes that Jennison in fact teaches away from such configurations. As cited in Applicant's previous responses, a "significant feature that [Jennison] provides is for convenient isolation of the internal telecommunication network from the service provider network. When no jumper cards are plugged into the edge connectors, there is a physical break between the internal network and the service provider network." Jennison, col. 4 lines 23-28. Therefore, Jennison teaches away from including any normally connected pairs in the absence of an interconnect module or circuit module included at the card edge socket or interconnect location of claims 1 and 8, respectively, and cannot be combined with references teaching normally connected contact pairs.

Because Jennison is not combinable with another reference to teach a card edge connector with normally connected pairs "electrically connected in the absence of an interconnect module introduced into the card edge socket", claims 3-7 are not obvious in view of Jennison, Curry et al., and Carlson et al. Likewise, because Jennison is not combinable with another reference to teach "interconnect locations for each receiving a removable circuit module, each interconnect location mounted to the front major surface of the back plane and including normally connected contact pairs, each contact pair electrically connected in the absence of a circuit module" claims 8-13 are not obvious in view of the cited references. Applicant therefore respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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